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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PACOM COMMANDER ADM KEATING'S OCT 9 MEETING WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER NAKASONE

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer; Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) PACOM Commander ADM Timothy Keating, accompanied by the Ambassador, told Foreign Minister Nakasone during an October 9 courtesy call that continued Japanese refueling operations in the Indian Ocean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) are critical for success in Afghanistan. Nakasone welcomed the arrival of the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, but underscored the need to ensure nuclear safety and good behavior by servicemen. He urged continued close cooperation between the United States and Japan in persuading China to be more transparent with its defense policy. He also stressed the importance of ongoing coordination in the Six-Party process for denuclearizing North Korea. Nakasone stressed that any verification regime for the DPRK's nuclear program must guarantee effective verification. Keating assured Nakasone that all PACOM engagement with China would not come at the expense of the U.S.-Japan Alliance. He stated that continued close cooperation on ballistic missile defense (BMD) will act as a powerful and effective deterrent.
END SUMMARY.

OEF REFUELING OPERATIONS CRITICAL

¶2. (C) On October 9, PACOM Commander Timothy Keating called on Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone. Nakasone informed Keating that the Japanese government intends to submit to the Diet the bill for the new Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law authorizing the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) to continue refueling missions in the Indian Ocean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) after the current mandate expires on January 15. The Japanese government believes that continued JMSDF refueling operations are an important part of the global war on terrorism and will do its best to ensure passage of the bill, Nakasone said. ADM Keating expressed appreciation for Japan's commitment to OEF and hoped that the Japanese government is successful in its endeavors to renew the refueling legislation. Recalling his experience as 5th Fleet/NAVCENT Commander, Keating assured Nakasone that JMSDF participation in OEF is absolutely critical to the coalition forces' success in Afghanistan.

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON SAFETY/CREW DISCIPLINE

13. (C) Foreign Minister Nakasone stated that he welcomed the successful deployment of the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON and its arrival to Yokosuka on September 25, adding that he was particularly touched by the Ambassador's speech. He urged the U.S. Navy to be mindful of the safety concerns of the local residents and ensure that safety is maintained aboard the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON. Nakasone also expressed hope that the crew members will maintain discipline during their tour and develop good relations with the local residents. ADM Keating responded that the deployment of the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON)- the only forward-deployed U.S. nuclear carrier overseas)- symbolizes the strength of the bilateral alliance. He stressed that many people in the United States also have concerns regarding the safety of nuclear powered vessels, but there is no need for concern as there has never been an accident involving nuclear safety aboard any U.S. Navy vessel. Keating added that the Navy will train every serviceman to respect Japanese culture and society during their assignment to Japan.

CHINA DEFENSE BUILDUP/DPRK NUCLEAR VERIFICATION

14. (C) Foreign Minister Nakasone summarized Japan's immediate security environment, focusing on China's military

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buildup and North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear programs. He stressed that Japan and the United States should urge China to take on a more responsible role in the international community. In particular, China needs to alleviate the concerns of its neighbors by increasing transparency in its defense policy and military spending. Japan will work hard to convince China that it, too, would benefit by doing so, Nakasone said. On North Korea, Nakasone underscored the threat posed to the region by the DPRK's nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile tests, which make clear the need to maintain a strong deterrence capability through close coordination between the United States and Japan. Nakasone expressed appreciation for the efforts by EAP Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill and other U.S. officials in the Six Party process, adding that the process has entered a crucial stage and that any verification regime for nuclear disablement must guarantee effective verification.

15. (C) ADM Keating said he agrees completely on the need to engage China, noting that policies aimed at cornering China in any way are not constructive. He assured Nakasone that the United States will coordinate closely with Japan and that PACOM's engagement with China would not be at the expense of the U.S.-Japan Alliance. Keating noted Japan's concerns about North Korea, pointing out that the DPRK's behavior highlighted the need for continued bilateral cooperation on ballistic missile defense (BMD), which acts as a powerful and effective deterrent. Nakasone agreed, noting the successful missile intercept test by the JMSDF AEGIS destroyer Kongo in December 2007. He added that another intercept test using the JDS Chokai will take place later this year.

16. (U) ADM Keating has cleared this message.
SCHIEFFER